



Honda Sport Touring Association

Washington State Chapter

Late September 2002

August 30-Sept 2 - Oregon Outing

It would be that time of year again, where we would embark on Oregon for this 4-day ride. Our travels would route us scenically to Pendleton on Friday, Hell's Canyon and back to Pendleton on Saturday, the forest service roads south of Ukiah on Sunday and home on Monday. The trip to and from Pendleton would be via Mt St Helens and Trout Lake.

Friday morning, Jim Holzberger, Brian Bailey, Dave Bolton, and I assembled in Puyallup and took off towards the Columbia. For this trip, I actually packed light, and even left the rain suit at home. I was feeling pretty confident that the forecasts would hold us over through the long weekend, especially being east of the Cascades.

We hot footed it to our favorite lunch spot, the Burger Buggy (this is becoming a BAD habit). Bryan skipped breakfast so that he could load up on some of that nutritional food (chili burger). After lunch, we continued to FR-88, the same one that I discovered previously on the Cascade Locks trip, only 2 weeks prior. When finished with that, I coaxed the others into riding SR-142 to Goldendale before we crossed into Oregon. That proved to be a good choice and once on the other side of the Columbia, we cut diagonally to Condon, over to Heppner, up to Pilot Rock, and finished our 370-mile day in Pendleton.

Arriving just in time for happy hour, Tye Aldana (new member from Oregon) joined us in the lounge. It turned out that this would comprise the final group for the weekend, even though a few others had stated that they would join along for some part of the weekend.

Saturday, the destination would be Halfway to Hell, in reverse (PUNin10did). Leaving Pendleton on SR-11, we then rode SR-204 to Elgin, where I got passed by a couple on another bike, in only the finest of motorcycle attire, shorts and t-shirts. As we continued up over the pass (5380 ft), the temperature started to drop, and I now regretted leaving my rain suit at home. Rain suits serve 2 purposes: staying dry AND insulation.

Things didn't start to warm up until we got to Elgin and connected onto SR-82 to Enterprise. I didn't intend to ride so far before breakfast, but we ended

doing 100 miles before our first stop. We ate at the Home Café where the food was good and the service was probably the best that we got all weekend. For whatever reason, food service sucked everywhere we went and especially at the Red Lion.

Now having filled OUR tanks, we turned east in Joseph, onto FR-39, and then rode for the next hour or so towards Hell's Canyon Overlook. We met a motorcycle gang going by the acronym of CHROME. It turns out that they were a Christian motorcycle group. Does anyone else see the irony: Christians in Hell's Canyon? As they pulled out of the parking lot, they were predominantly on Honda cruisers with stock pipes that made it the quietest black, leather-clad gang that I'd ever seen.

After leaving the forest roads behind, we continued west on SR-86 to Halfway and lunch in Baker City. We spoke with some locals that told us that the Anthony Lakes road that we were looking forward to was torn up for construction so we altered our plan and would finish our day by going north on I-84, just past La Grande, and then take SR-244, west to Ukiah. We took one last break here, prior to finishing our 420-mile day.

On the way back, we encountered a couple of SUV's in our path. As they were driving uphill, one was overtaking the other, and when they realized that there were bikes fast approaching in their oncoming lane, they both got on the brakes simultaneously, and neither could file in behind the other. Bryan, Jim and Tye ended up on the shoulder, expecting to go 3 abreast on a 2-lane highway. One of the SUV's actually saluted us with a single-finger gesture! What a jerk! This turned out to be a perfect example of a discussion we had only minutes earlier about staying on top of our game and being alert at all times.

On Sunday morning, Bryan had to run home to finish closing a real estate deal so we were down to 4 for the rest of the weekend. Tye and Dave had been pretty much bringing up the rear thus far but that was about to change...

Sunday morning we had ridden to John Day via the Ukiah forest service roads that we've done on this ride in the past. Again, speaking to a local resident, we got word of a great paved back road that the map still

shows as un-paved. Due to time, we would save it for another day to explore. Lunch was at a pizza place that was obviously understaffed for the weekend. The service was non-existent, but the food was fabulous, once we got it. Dave didn't get what he ordered but made due. The price was right - FREE.

During the "lounge hours" of the previous nights, we had many discussions on riding techniques, racing, and other motorcycle related stuff. Today, we were all practicing what we had talked about. Dave was working on leaning in and leaning out in his turns, Jim no longer had to pause for Brian's swoopy lines right in front of him, Tye picked up the pace (did he ever!), and I was working on setting my lean and then releasing any pressure on the bars. The section on US-395 heading north from John Day, allowed us to practice the aforementioned techniques, without the interference of other vehicles.

As we finished up a twisty section, still about 50 miles from Pendleton, we came across what was left of a trailer park after a tornado ripped through it (so it appeared). Stuff was strewn all over a highway, cars were stopped, and it became obvious that there had been an accident of some sort. As we got closer, we could see some bikers flagging people around, an emptied motorcycle trailer on its side, but still on the highway, and an upside-down Goldwing in the ditch. About 30 feet away, the rider had been thrown clear and was being tended to by other bikers.

Seeing how this was along a straight section of road, and looking the rather large size of the trailer, we could only surmise that a side-wind had caused the trailer to sway, and away they went. The rider's face was bloodied because of only wearing a 1/2 helmet, but otherwise seemed to be coming around. This all must've happened only a couple of minutes ahead of us. I paused to take a few pictures of the wreckage (not for the gore factor) and then we rode on. As we got close to Pilot Rock, we met the oncoming ambulance in the opposite direction and another 15 minutes later, we saw the OSP heading the same way. We found it hard to believe that we had ridden for about 45 minutes, before we saw the response team on their way, and they still had a number of miles to go.

Our day was completed with just over 300 miles and Dave, once again, got the shaft at dinner in the lounge. He ordered one item, and they brought out something completely different and gave him the option to eat it or pick something else, without letting him know that the choice had changed. The bartender would not negotiate on price either...

Monday morning came and we wanted to get an early start to beat traffic home. Pulling out the map, we decided that crossing at Umatilla and heading west on SR-14 along the Columbia would be the best option. Tye would join us at least as far as the Burger Buggy

(see what I mean about bad habits) and decide his return from there.

No sooner did we cross, did we see a Benton Co Sheriff with someone on the side of the road. We rode past, waved and he smiled. A couple of miles up the road, we pulled over to take a break and here comes Johnny Law, pulling in right behind us. It turned out to be a friendly chat. We laughed when he said that he saw us coming and thought to himself, "These guys look like they know what they're doing."

He shared some stories with us about other squids and complimented us on our garb. I snapped a picture, and he was off to go have coffee. Occasionally, you find a GOOD cop, and I have a picture as proof.



We rode to Lyle, where the ultimate decision was to ride SR-142 or not. (Duh... If you've been reading these newsletters!) Once we finished with the good section through Klickitat and Wahkiakus, we took a left turn to Glenwood to explore and hoping not to backtrack. This road zigzagged down a canyon and back up again before depositing us at Trout Lake.

From here, we took the low road back to the BB, had lunch, said goodbye to Tye, and filed in-line going home on SR-7 and SR-161 to Puyallup. As we approached Puyallup on SR-161, it had just started to rain, and Dave pulled over to don the rain gear. Shortly thereafter, the rain stopped and I was able to finish getting home with only a light sprinkle. I'm sure that Dave's actions appeased the Rain-Gods and they held off just long enough. I showed 1500+ miles for this trip, making it one of the longer weekends this year, but 4-Corners is coming in a couple of weeks!

September 13-15 – 4 Corners of WA

The last of the weekend rides has come and gone. Our mission wasn't exactly to touch the corners (Blaine, Metaline Falls, Anatone, Ilwaco, Neah Bay) but to make just about the biggest loop you can in 3 days, racking up monster miles in the process and hopefully finding NEW roads to explore.

Figuring on about 1500-1600 miles in 3 days, this was going to be one of the most intense club rides of the year. Granted, this is nothing for a true IronButter, but we aren't on Goldwings or ST's. Jim Holzberger, Dave Bolton, and I participated, knowing full well that there would be some droning involved.

To start off, the three of us met for breakfast as previously decided upon, and then pulled into the truck stop just before 8am to see if anyone showed up for the impending abuse. At 8:03am with no one to be seen, we immediately rode on to Rockport for our first gas stop.

The morning air was pretty brisk out of Darrington, and I wondered why the guys were on my tail the whole time. (I got confused when it wasn't the yellow TL that I'm used to seeing) It finally dawned on me that Jim and Dave were drafting me to stay just a bit warmer. I thought if we had left a little later, the morning temps would've been warmer, but the flip side is the higher temps later in the day.

Riding through Winthrop, without as much as a look around, we got gas and decided that lunch in Omak would be appropriate. Now north on US-97, we made our way to Tonasket, where we came across another sport rider (2-up) that was riding his sport bike Harley-style, making it difficult to pass him except by out-breaking him in the corners. Jim finally had enough and went to pass. The guy didn't back off until Jim almost dragged him through the impending corner. The rest of us quickly passed him thereafter.

We continued east on SR-20 over Sherman Pass. This was our first encounter with bears on this trip and the first one looked interested, but changed his mind after tapping the brakes. The second bear, not but a couple of turns away, was already doing business. I'm sure that the tell-tale audio on his radar gun started at a rapid, high-pitch toning down to a slow, low-pitch as we rode by. As he was walking towards his already detained victim, he looked at us and threw up both hands (one with a ticket book) as if to say, "What's a guy to do when the BIG one goes by and you've already got a small one on the hook?" We couldn't help but laugh at that near miss.

Now the temps were downright hot. We pulled into Kettle Falls for gas and it must've been over 100. Next we rode south along SR-25, which was pretty scenic, but not very sporting. A quick break in Fort Spokane to cool off and hydrate gave us enough juice to continue on. We took SR-28 south from Davenport to

SR-23 and were looking to end up in Colfax, possibly Lewiston, Idaho, for the night.

When we got to St John, it looked like maybe the town wasn't getting their fair share of tourist dollars so they forced us to detour out of downtown into the residential district, showing us all that they had to offer, which wasn't much. Once through the construction, we pulled into Colfax and after not seeing a place to stay for the night, Pullman was our next option down the road.

By now it was getting dark fast, and we were feeling like the Orkin men controlling the bug population. We had to stop every 50 miles or less to wipe our shields and also to rest. This was a LONG day and finding a bed was top priority now. Our search achieved success in Pullman, where we stopped after a 600+ mile day.

In the morning, we backtracked to Colfax since none of the roads west of Pullman allowed us to ride a direct line to where we were going. This leg would take us west towards the coast and would involve more droning. We were going to try to mix it up a bit to keep from getting so tired.

The roads (SR-261 and SR-260) from Starbuck to Connell did the job quite well. We actually got the opportunity to expel any carbon buildup over this section of road and our steeds got to stretch their legs.

When we arrived in Connell, every law enforcement officer within 100 miles was waiting for us. Not exactly, but it turned out that they were preparing for some parade, which created a great diversion. This was perfect for us because we now knew where the "bear cave" was.

To get some more miles behind us and since there are limited roads around the Hanford area, the decision was made to slab to Pasco on US-395, and then I-82 to Prosser. We ducked off on SR-241 and stopped in Mabton (next to the Red Bull tower) for lunch, prior to heading to Goldendale via Bickleton. Now this stretch was pretty boring heading east, but going west wasn't too bad.

All the forecasts that we heard to this point, were indicating rain on the coast on Sunday. Because of this, we bagged the peninsula loop. The final part of this trip was north through Mt St Helens and then home for the night. We rode to Glenwood and then the same route as the last report.

Back in Trout Lake (again) I inquired locally about real estate. Dave had a problem with his rear tire (read: no rubber left). When the Metzlers decide to go, they go! Sustained high speeds for long periods of time are a tire's worse enemy. By the time we reached Puyallup, we had covered a total about 1200 miles in two days. Dave's tire would not have gone another day.

Honda Sport Touring Association
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100K Quest

As I write this, I have 96k+ on my odometer and I'm wondering where I will rack up my last 4000 miles prior to years end. Should I ride to Reno for a weekend, accumulating 1500? What about sprinting to Billings and back for another 1500? Or maybe ride the mountain that eats bikes, Mt St Helens, for 10 trips?

With only a little ways to go to achieve my quest, I'm wondering if the late summer will hold out, or if we're in for an early and wet winter.

Regardless, I would like to thank everyone that came out for some of the great rides throughout the year. This year's aggressive club schedule was a huge success as busy as it was. No one crashed, and as a group, we didn't even get pulled over. There were green awards this year, but we're currently strategizing on how to beat them in court.

As I look forward into next year, I foresee that I will not be able to participate at such a high level as I did this year. My instructing obligations are growing and I will also be pursuing one other personal goal. What that means is that, while you all will be taking in scenery, I will be doing some track riding. Not that that is a bad thing, just different.

I hope that I am still able to keep some level of club involvement, but thinking to be fair to my wife and myself, I will have to scale back somewhere.

I look forward to the Awards Dinner on November 9th, and hope to see you all there. It's always great fun to share the stories from this last year.

Events At-A-Glance

OCTOBER							NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4	5					1	2
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30

September 28 – Ride to **Mt St Helens** – 8 am Ride
Meet at Safeway (Enumclaw)

This will be the final HARD ride of the season

October 12 – Ride to **Leavenworth** – 12 noon Ride
Meet at Albertson's (Monroe)

Good Two-up ride, Easy pace on this one

November 9 – **HSTA Dinner at Olive Garden** – 7 pm
Club Awards / Recap of Season
11325 NE 124th Avenue
Kirkland, WA 98034
(425) 820-7740